

THIS WEEK IN AGRICULTURE

News briefs from and about Idaho's agricultural industry

May 22-28, 2005

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Secretary Johanns listens to concerns about CAFTA

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns told Idaho agriculture leaders on Tuesday that the state's agriculture industry will prosper under the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). But several representatives of the sugar industry in Idaho and the state's leaders are concerned the agreement, still pending in Congress, would be harmful to sugar if enacted.

Johanns came to Idaho as part of a state-to-state campaign in support of the agreement. He maintains that the sugar industry has little to lose if the trade pact is ratified. Johanns repeated, as he has in other conferences, that the sugar authorized in CAFTA is slight, "something like two packages a day. There's not enough sugar in CAFTA to impact the program."

But Amalgamated Sugar officials say free-trade agreements are allowing large sugar imports to flood the market, resulting in less acreage and lower prices.

Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne supports many of the components of the trade agreement, but as with the Idaho congressional delegation, does not support the treaty's sugar provisions. Idaho's beef producers are actively supporting CAFTA.

"Left unhindered, U.S. cattlemen and ranchers are extremely successful in the global marketplace," Idaho Cattle Association President-elect Mike Webster said. "Without a level playing field, however, it's difficult for us to compete."

Idaho State Department of Agriculture spokesman Wayne Hoffman thanked the secretary for coming to Idaho and holding a frank discussion with Idaho's agriculture leaders about CAFTA. Hoffman emphasized that while there's disagreement about

the components of CAFTA, it is clear that international trade is a major factor in the health of agriculture in the state and the state's economic outlook.

For more information contact Wayne Hoffman at (208)332-8671

New fund starts with \$5,000 for rural Idaho

Monsanto has donated \$5,000 to start a new fund aimed at helping rural Idaho, the Idaho Rural Partnership has announced.

"We truly look at the Fund for Rural Idaho as an opportunity to invest in this state," said Trent L. Clark, Public Affairs Director for Monsanto. "A thriving rural economy depends on the collaboration and partnership made possible by the Idaho Rural Partnership and Idaho Rural Business Council. We believe so strongly in the concept, practical applications and track record of IRP, our investment was an easy decision."

Idaho Rural Partnership Executive Director Dale Dixon said, "Rural Idaho is an incredible market for businesses in agriculture, manufacturing, high-tech, and travel and tourism sectors. Investment in the Fund for Rural Idaho helps build on the business-friendly reputation for which rural Idaho is known. We foresee the fund supporting a variety of entrepreneurship, education, economic development and leadership training activities."

For more information contact Dale Dixon at (208) 334-3131

Gooding High School team wins Envirothon contest

More than one hundred high school students competed this month for \$75,000 in scholarships and the privilege to represent Idaho in a national competition. The honor went to a team from Gooding High School and members Brett Cheney, Nick Tiller, Becky Frieberg, Jill Dalton, Katie Haffner and Anthony Ranollo.

"These students have worked so hard all year and I am proud to see them succeed," said Becky Frieberg, advisor to the winning team. "Even more important though, is the knowledge and understanding they have gained. Educating for natural resource management promises greater stewardship of the environment for future generations. It is rewarding to see such valuable results for everyone's efforts."

The students gathered May 9 and 10 at the Living Waters Ranch in Challis to participate in Idaho's 13th annual Envirothon competition.

Twenty-three teams tested their knowledge of natural resource conservation during the two-day competition – participating in hands-on sessions on soils,



Brett Cheney, Nick Tiller, Becky Frieberg, Jill Dalton, Katie Haffner, Anthony Ranollo

forestry, aquatics, wildlife, and this year's current issue, "Managing Cultural Landscapes." The teams were also presented with a hypothetical scenario and asked to find the best resource management solutions, which they then presented to a panel of judges.

Finalists from across the nation, including Idaho's top team from Gooding High School, will participate in the National Canon Envirothon, hosted by Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri July 18 - 24.

To learn how to become a participant, sponsor or volunteer, visit the Canon Envirothon website at www.envirothon.org or call Kent Foster, Executive Director of the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts at 208-338-5900 for local area information.

USDA to purchase 80 million pounds of potatoes

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns has announced that the USDA plans to purchase up to 80 million pounds of frozen and dehydrated potatoes in response to a request from Idaho's congressional delegation requesting the action.

The potatoes will be purchased under the authority of the Section 32 bonus buy program and will be used for domestic food assistance and child nutrition programs.

The purchase is in addition to 100 million pounds of potatoes already purchased this year.

The delegation wrote in its letter to Johanns, "When growers have periods of unusually high yields and resulting low prices, the Section 32 program serves to stabilize their market and allow them to continue to survive in an already rigid marketplace where small changes in price or supply dramatically impacts their ability to compete."

Branded program workshop slated for June 23

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture and the Western U.S. Agriculture Trade Association will be conducting a MAP Branded Program workshop on June 23 in Pocatello, Idaho.

The Branded Program is a reimbursement funding program that supports the promotion of food and non-food agricultural products in foreign markets. Made possible through funding from the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), the program provides participants with a 50 percent cost reimbursement for eligible marketing and promotional activities.

At this seminar you will learn how to get your share of these funds for export promotion.

The workshop will be held at Idaho Farm Bureau Federation 275 Tierra Vista Drive Pocatello, ID 83201. For further information please call Jerry Ward at (208) 332-8537.

Wilson Marketing, Bean Commission win awards

Wilson Marketing Group and the Idaho Bean Commission have received awards for their efforts in opening foreign markets at the Governor's Export Marketing Awards at World Trade Day last week.

Wilcox Marketing Group received recognition for its efforts in shipping potatoes to Mexico. Lynn Wilcox, president, and Terry Wilcox, secretary, accepted the award.

Wilcox Marketing Group has lead Idaho in exports to Mexico. Arturo Rodriquez of Wilcox Marketing Group was unable to be there.

"We appreciate the Idaho State Department of Agriculture guidance in this venture," Lynn Wilcox said when receiving the award.

The Idaho Bean Commission received recognition for opening the Mexican border for Idaho Certified bean seed. This effort spans years of hard work that started on the Governor's Trade Mission in 2003. Brent Zeyer, Commissioner, and Diane Caldwell, Administrator, accepted the award on behalf of the Idaho Bean Commission. In accepting the award, Diana Caldwell acknowledged the support of the of the State Department of Agriculture's marketing bureau.

"We would like to thank (the staff of) the Idaho State Department of Agriculture for their support over the past five years. Without their help, this award would not have been possible," she said.

Smoke management programs set for southern Idaho

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Idaho Farm Bureau and the Idaho Grain Producers Association will host eight smoke management training sessions across southern Idaho next month. The state's smoke management program requires growers to register their fields. Farmers are encouraged to take the training to learn how the program works, how to properly burn their fields and work with the department in an effort to help minimize the effect of smoke on our farm community neighbors. Trainings are scheduled as follows:

Monday, June 13

- 7 p.m. at the Canyon County Farm Bureau board room, 4122 E. Cleveland Blvd.
- 8 p.m. at the Fruitland Community Center, 209 S. Iowa (Turn north on Iowa at the school district office; the community center is directly behind)

Tuesday, June 14

- 8 a.m. at the Twin Falls County Farm Bureau board room, 2732 Kimberly Road, Twin Falls.
- 7 p.m. at the Mini-Cassia Farm Bureau board room, 444 E. 5th N., Burley.

Wednesday, June 15

- 8 a.m. at the Bingham County Farm Bureau board room, 124 N. Oak, Blackfoot
- 7 p.m. at the Franklin County Farm Bureau board room, 33 S. 1st East, Preston

Thursday, June 16

- 8 a.m. at the Bonneville County Farm Bureau board room, 1655 Hollipark Drive, Idaho Falls
- 7 p.m. at the Madison County Farm Bureau board room, 1116 Bond Ave., Rexburg

For more information, contact the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation at 333-7083 (Boise) or 239-4325 (Pocatello); Idaho Grain Producers, 345-0706; or Idaho State Department of Agriculture, 332-8609.

Students participate in 23rd annual forestry contest

More than 300 elementary, junior high, and senior high school kids gathered at the Delay Farm in Careywood, Idaho, last week compete in the 23rd annual Idaho State Forestry Contest.

Junior and senior high schoolers competed by putting their forestry knowledge to the test, with cash and prizes on the line for the winners.

Participants demonstrated their knowledge of tool identification, log scaling, map reading, tree and plant identification, tree health, soil and water quality, timber cruising, noxious weeds, compass and pacing, and silviculture.

The forestry contest introduces youngsters to some basic skills used in the forestry profession and promotes knowledge and understanding of our forests, and it gives them a chance to interact with professional foresters and conservationists to explore career opportunities in the field of forestry and natural resources.

The forestry contest takes place at the home of Ray and Fairy Delay, where their 1,200 acre tree farm has provided participants a hands-on learning experience in forest stewardship since 1983.

The winners are:

Top Individual - David Ritz Memorial Plaque: Cameron Neely, Coeur d'Alene HS Team 1

Second Place Senior Division Individual: Dan Nielson, Post Falls HS Team 1

Third Place Senior Division Individual: Ben Nielson, Post Falls HS Team 1

First Place Senior Division Team: Coeur d'Alene HS Team 1 – Cameron Neely, Brian Church, Cassie Johnson, Amber Guy

Second Place Senior Division Team: Post Falls HS Team 1 - Dan Nielson, Ben Nielson, Cody Stockman, Caralea Nelson



Third Place Senior Division Team: Coeur d'Alene HS Team 2 – Tiffany Kimball, Sammy Randal, Ashley Batchelder, Mike Beatty

First Place Junior Division Individual: Casey Thomas, Post Falls Middle School Team 2

Second Place Junior Division Individual: Nora Nielson, Post Falls Middle School Team 1

Third Place Junior Division Individual: Josh Erickson, Post Falls Middle School Team 1

First Place Junior Division Team: Post Falls Middle School Team 1 - Joshua Erickson, Nora Nielson, Crystal Kerr, Kimber Boyles

Second Place Junior Division Team: Post Falls Middle School Team 2 – Arthur Francis, Casey Thomas, John Erickson, Eric Lundholm

Third Place Junior Division Team: Post Falls Middle School Team 3 – Andrew Craghead, Dendra Mudge, Shannon Nunez, Hollie Sakellariou

For more information, visit www.iascd.state.id or www.icehouse.net/ksswcd. The Bonner Soil and Water Conservation District can also be contacted at (208) 263-5310.

ISDA Marketing Division calendar

May 21-24: National Restaurant Association (NRA) Food Show: Chicago, IL

June: Buying Mission – Chinese buyers tour orchards, packing and distribution facilities in the Northwest including Idaho.

July: Chef Demonstrations on Mexican Cooking Show - Monterrey, Mexico. The Colorado Department of Agriculture and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture work on cooking Shows that showcase Western United States products.

This Week in Agriculture is a publication of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. To contribute items to the newsletter, or for more information, contact

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The deadline to submit all articles is 10 am Thursday